



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

have assimilated their names and surnames to those of the English, and the reasons which have led them to do so. I would not so much regret their having done so, if I were not aware that some of the families who have thus Anglicised their names wish to conceal their Irish origin, as if they were ashamed of their ancestors and country, and that another result of these changes must soon be, that statistical writers will be apt to infer from the small number of ancient Irish surnames retained in Ireland, that all the old Irish race were supplanted by the English.

I shall close these notices of the surnames of the Irish people by a remark which I should wish to be universally believed, namely—That no ancient Irish surname is perfect unless it has either O or Mac prefixed, excepting in those instances where the soubriquet or cognomen of the ancestor is used as the surname, as Cavanagh, &c., and, accordingly, that nine-tenths of the surnames at present borne by the Irish people are incorrect, as being mere mutilations of their original forms.

"Per Mac atque O, tu veros cognoscis Hibernos
His duobus demptis, nullus Hibernus adest :
By Mac and O
You'll surely know
True Irishmen alway ;
But if they lack
Both O and Mac,
No Irishmen are they."

The truth of this well-known distich may now be questioned, though it was correct a few centuries since.

It is but natural to suppose that a conquered people should look upon themselves as inferior to their conquerors ; and this rage for adopting English surnames which prevails at present, is, in the opinion of the writer, a clear proof of the prevalence of this feeling, that the Irish consider themselves inferior to the English. Spenser, while he advises that the Irish be compelled to reject their O's and Macs, and to adopt English surnames, dissuades his own countrymen from adopting Irish ones, as some of them had done, in the following words, which the writer, being as Irish as Spenser was English, now adopts as his own :—"Is it possible that any should so farre growe out of frame, that they should in so short space, quite forget their country and their own names ! that is a most dangerous lethargie, much worse than that of Messala Corvinus, who being a most learned man, thorough sickness forgot his own name."—*State of Ireland, Dub. Ed. p. 107.*

And again :—

"Could they ever conceive any such dislike of their own natural countreys as that they would be ashamed of their name, and byte at the dugge from which they sucked life ?"—*Ibid. p. 108.*

THE ICHNEUMON.

OF this animal many very absurd stories have been told, amongst which not the least ridiculous is, that it watches its opportunity when the huge crocodile of the Nile slumbers upon the river bank, and, artfully inducing the monster to yawn by tickling his nostril with its tail, rushes fearlessly and with wondrous agility between the terrible jaws and their formidable rows of teeth, and, forcing its daring way down its throat, retains possession of its strange citadel until it has destroyed its unwieldy victim, when it gnaws its way out, and leaves the carcase to wither in the sun. Other travellers have pretended to contradict the above story, but their mode of doing so involves a piece of absurdity no less glaring than the equally unfounded legend they assume to themselves the merit of correcting ; for by their account the Ichneumon does not enter the throat of the crocodile with a hostile intent at all, neither does it use its tail to cause that creature to open its jaws, for of that is there no need, seeing that the crocodile opens them of his own will, and likewise with pleasure allows the Ichneumon to enter for the purpose of clearing his throat of swarms of tormenting insects which lodge therein, and by their stinging produce intolerable pain. I can however assure my readers that this subject has been, since the above conflicting statements reached us, effectually cleared up ; and you may confidently rely upon it that the Ichneumon no more enters the crocodile's mouth whether as a friend or as an enemy, whether to destroy him or destroy his tormentors the flies, than that he attacks him while awake.

The Ichneumon is shaped somewhat like a ferret, but is rather more slender in its form, and its head is likewise longer and narrower ; it is also an animal of far greater activity and lightness of movement, being able to clear at one spring a

distance of a couple of yards. It is further a most expert climber, and it will be a very high wall indeed that will confine it within an enclosure. The colour of the Ichneumon is a brownish grey, or a light brown barred with white ; the animal indeed appears speckled with a dirty white, but it is so only in appearance, the fact being, that each several hair has brown and white rings upon it. Upon the back, sides, and tail, these rings are small, and the hair longer than upon the head and extremities of its limbs ; hence these latter parts appear of a darker hue. The hair upon the feet is very short and thin, and they are nearly as naked as those of the common rat. The tail of the Ichneumon is very long, usually one-sixth longer than its body, and upon its extremity is a tuft of very long black hair. The hair of this creature is drier, thicker, and weaker, than in any other member of the same genus.

The length of a full-grown Ichneumon, from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail, is about two feet six inches, of which the tail occupies about sixteen inches, and the body fourteen. The length of the head is about three inches, measuring from the back of the ears to the point of the muzzle. The height of the Ichneumon at the most elevated part of the back is about six inches ; but this of course varies according to the animal's position at the time of measurement.

The habits of the Ichneumon present a sort of admixture of those of the ferret and the cat ; like the former, it delights in blood, and where it has once fastened itself, maintains a tenacious hold ; but like the latter, and unlike the former, it has but little stomach for braving danger, and will rather go without its dinner than run the chance of a battle in obtaining it. He is strictly a nocturnal animal, and usually remains in his covert until the shades of evening begin to fall around, when he sallies forth on his career of havoc and blood. Were it not necessary for the satisfying of his appetite, I doubt whether he would leave his haunt at all, so timid is he : he steals along the ground with light and cautious steps, his motions resembling the gliding of the snake rather than the progressive steps of the quadruped. His sharp, vigilant, sparkling black eyes are anxiously reconnoitring every side of him, and carefully examining the character and bearings of every object which meets his view ; stealthily he creeps along until he comes upon the spot where the crocodile has hidden her eggs in the sand ; nimbly and cleverly he pounces upon them, guided to their place of concealment by his exquisite sense of smell, and, biting a hole in their side, banquets on their contents. It is thus that the Ichneumon thins the numbers of that formidable reptile the crocodile, not by directing its attacks against that creature himself, but by insidiously searching after and destroying his embryo offspring. The Ichneumon likewise kills and devours with extreme greediness such small snakes and lizards as are common in its native country, many of which are highly dangerous, and all annoying enough to make their destruction desirable, to which the Ichneumon appears guided by a powerful instinct. It is sometimes bitten in these encounters, when it is said immediately to search for and devour the root of a certain plant, said to be an antidote against the bite of the most venomous reptile. It is alleged that this little animal will frequently kill even the Cobra di Capello. Lucan in his Pharsalia describes the manner in which it contrives to destroy the Asp, one of the most poisonous serpents in existence. The passage I refer to has been translated thus :—

Thus oft the Ichneumon on the banks of Nile
Invades the deadly Aspic by a wile ;
While artfully his slender tail is play'd,
The serpent darts upon the dancing shade.
Then turning on the foe with swift surprise,
Full on the throat the nimble seizer flies.
The gasping snake expires beneath the wound,
His gushing jaws with poisonous floods abound,
And shed the fruitless mischief on the ground.

In consequence of the vigilance and success of this little animal in destroying these noxious creatures, he was held in great veneration by the Egyptians and Hindoos ; but by the former he was actually regarded as a disguised divinity, clothed in that form for the purpose of putting his benevolent purposes into practice with the greater readiness ; and we accordingly find him occupying a prominent position in the sacred symbols of that people, who were indeed commonly in the habit of deifying whatever afforded them peculiar benefit of any kind, as they likewise adored the river Nile, on account of the fertilizing effect produced by its periodical inundations.

The Ichneumon is said, if taken young, to be capable of perfect domestication, to form a strong attachment to the person who reared him, as well as to the house he inhabits ;

whence from his zeal and activity in the destruction of rats and mice, he forms a valuable substitute for the cat, which indeed he is in Egypt used instead of. He is also said to be very domestic in his habits, quite a tarry-at-home kind of gentleman, and, unlike puss, never on any account given to ramble; when lost, he is said to seek his patron with indefatigable zeal until he finds him, and to express his joy at rejoining him by the most tender and affectionate caresses. When he eats, however, nature asserts her prerogative, and the natural disposition of the animal resumes its place, whence it had for a time been driven by artificial means.

Indeed it requires but little to awaken in this creature all its natural fierceness and love of slaughter, notwithstanding that so much has been said and written of its amiability and docility. Mr D'Obsonville, in his "Essay on the Nature of Animals," gives an account of a domesticated individual which he had in his possession, which places its disposition in a correct point of view. He got the animal very young, and fed it upon milk, and as it grew older, upon baked meat, mixed with rice. He states that it soon became even tamer than a cat, would come to his call, and if at liberty, follow him everywhere, even in his walks. One day Mr D'Obsonville brought him a small living water-serpent, curious to ascertain how far his instinct would carry him against a creature with which he had been hitherto totally unacquainted. "His emotion," says Mr D'Obsonville, "seemed at first to be that of astonishment mixed with anger, for his hair became erect; but in an instant after, he slipped behind the reptile, and with remarkable swiftness and agility leaped upon its head, seized it, and crushed it between his teeth. This essay and new aliment seemed to have awakened in him his innate and destructive voracity, which till then had given way to the gentleness he had acquired from his education. I had about my house several curious kinds of fowls, among which he had been brought up, and which till then he had suffered to go and come unmolested and unregarded; but a few days after, when he found himself alone, he strangled them every one, ate a little, and, as it appeared, drank the blood of two."

I have already stated that the Ichneumon is said to eat of the leaves or root of a certain plant in the event of his being bitten by a poisonous serpent. I revert to the circumstance, because it is an extraordinary one, inasmuch as the Indians follow the example of the animal, and use the same plant successfully as an antidote when they themselves happen to get a bite, and call the plant after the animal. This is curious, as being parallel with the case of the Guacomithy or Serpent Hawk of South America, mentioned in one of my papers on Serpent Charming; nor is it upon light authority that I relate this fact of the Ichneumon. Mr Percival, that close and scrupulous observer, saw the experiment tried of presenting a snake to the animal in a closed room, when, instead of attacking, it did all in its power to avoid it. On the snake, however, being carried out of the house, and laid near its antagonist in a plantation, he immediately darted at and soon destroyed it. The Ichneumon then retired to a wood, and ate a portion of that plant which is said to be an antidote to the serpent's bite, and no harm came to him, although he had received a bite in the encounter.

I for my part can speak but little for the gentleness of the Ichneumon, or the facility with which it may be tamed, having one in my own possession, which has now for a considerable period baffled all my endeavours to domesticate it, and will not even now suffer me to approach the case in which it is kept, without growling fiercely at me, and spitting in the manner of an enraged cat, springing also against the bars of its prison, and using its utmost endeavours to fly in my face. I have tried starvation, high feeding, kindness, chastisement, hard usage, and tenderness, all by turns, and as yet unsuccessfully. I was never so baffled in taming an animal before, though the polecat, weasel, fox, and badger, have with the otter successively owned my mastery, and acknowledged me as their subjugator. I have not even handled this animal yet, unless with a thick glove upon my hand, and even with that protection I have received several severe bites. I saw one, however, in the Royal Zoological Gardens some time ago, which was very tame, and would suffer itself to be caressed even by strangers; so I shall persevere; and should I eventually succeed in taming the little savage, depend upon it the reader shall be advertised of the fact, and of all the circumstances attendant thereupon.

Until lately the Ichneumon had not a well-determined name in the methodical catalogues. Naturalists have mostly described it rather by character than figure. Figures were

indeed given by Gesner, Aldrovandi, and others, but not sufficiently distinct to guard against mistake. Even Buffon mistook the Mangouste for it, to which he has applied all the descriptions properly belonging to the Ichneumon. The name "Ichneumon" is Greek, and is indicative of the habits of the animal, and was first applied to it by Herodotus.

I trust that the above sketch may serve to point out the animal and its habits to the reader with sufficient distinctness.

H. D. R.

MODERN EDUCATION.—"Larning—larning—larning," is the cry of father an' mother—if my boy had the "larning," what a janius he'd be! In coorse, ye old fools, your *bouchal* would be a swan among the goslins; but it isn't "larning" half the world want: instead of "larning," by which they mean cobwebs picked out of dead men's brains, if they would get some discipline. Discipline—discipline—discipline, that's the only education I ever saw that brought a boy to any good. What's the use of *battering* a man's brains full of Greek and Latin pothooks, that he forgets before he doffs his last round jacket, to put on his first long-tailed blue, if ye don't teach him the old Spartan virtue of obedience, hard living, early rising, and them sort of classics? Where's the use of instructing him in hexameters and pentameters, if you leave him ignorant of the value of a penny piece? What height of bletherin' stupidity it is to be fillin' a boy's brains with the wisdom of the ancients, and then turn him out like an *omadhaun* to pick up his victuals among the moderns!—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

TO OUR READERS.

It becomes our duty to acquaint our readers that the present Number of the IRISH PENNY JOURNAL, which will complete a volume, will also be the last presented to them, at least by its original projectors and present proprietors. Our readers will hardly deem it necessary that we should trouble them with any detail of the circumstances which have led to this determination; it will be sufficient to state, that while the success of the work has in some respects even exceeded the anticipations of its proprietors, it has disappointed them in others. The sale of the Journal, although great and steadily progressing in those distant localities where any increase of sale was least to be expected, has been either stationary or diminishing in those portions of the kingdom for whose use and advantage it was especially intended, and to which, therefore, the proprietors naturally looked for the greatest degree of encouragement. However humbling it may be to the national feeling of most of our Irish readers, the fact must be acknowledged, that the sale of the Journal in London alone has exceeded that in the four provinces of Ireland, not including Dublin; and that in other cities at the other side of the Channel it has been nearly equal to half the Irish provincial sale. And it may be added that in London, as well as in most other cities in the sister island, the sale has to the present moment continued to increase, while in all parts of Ireland, with the exception of the metropolis, it has gradually declined. In short, nearly two-thirds of the amount of sales of the IRISH PENNY JOURNAL have been effected out of Ireland. Whatever may be the causes of this result, it is sufficient for the proprietors to have ascertained, that the object which they had originally in view in starting this little publication, have not been attained to the extent which they had anticipated, and that, under such circumstances, it would be visionary in them further to indulge hopes which there is so little probability of ever being realised.

The proprietors have only therefore to take a respectful leave of their numerous readers and supporters, and return their grateful acknowledgments to all who have taken an interest in their publication. To the Press of the British Empire such an expression of gratitude is especially due, for from those influential organs of public opinion it has received during its progress the most cheering encouragement, and this, too, wholly unmingled with even a portion of censure or dispraise. That such commendations have not been altogether undeserved, and that the promises made in the original prospectus have not been left unfulfilled, the proprietors fondly anticipate will be the permanent opinion of the public; and they indulge, moreover, the pleasing conviction, that the volume now brought to a termination will live in the literature of Ireland as one almost exclusively Irish, and possessing what may be considered as no trifling distinction for such a work—a spirit throughout its pages wholly national, and untinged by the slightest admixture of prejudices either political or sectarian.

Printed and published every Saturday by GUNN and CAMERON, at the Office of the General Advertiser, No. 6, Church Lane, College Green, Dublin.—Agents:—R. GROOMBRIDGE, Panzer Alley, Paternoster Row, London; SIMMS and DINHAM, Exchange Street, Manchester; C. DAVIES, North John Street, Liverpool; JOHN MENZIES, Prince's Street, Edinburgh; and DAVID ROBERTSON, Trongate, Glasgow.